

Mindful Work

Being mindful of mental health problems at work

Whilst things are improving, there is still a stigma about talking about or admitting to having a mental health problem. The fact is that 1 in 4 of us will experience common problems such as stress and anxiety, or more serious problems, each year.

So whatever your own inhibitions, we can help each other by being alert to colleagues with a problem, and maybe offer a caring hand up.

Here's a simple guide to what to look out for, and what to do about it:

What to look for in your colleagues:

- increased lateness or absence
- decreased productivity
- being distracted and dreamy
- not talking as much, or more than usual
- slow thinking or making mistakes
- lack of self-confidence
- agitation and conflict
- appearing overwhelmed
- behaving oddly and being more introvert

How to talk about it with a colleague

- approach them and start a conversation
- listen - don't try to solve it, argue or give advice
- don't belittle or make fun of their problem
- try to assess how serious it might be
- is it an emergency?
- stay with them if necessary
- offer emotional support – just being there
- encourage them to seek professional help

Where to get help

- Mental Health First Aiders
- NHS emergency 999
- Medical advice line 111
- Samaritans 116123 – especially if suicidal
- Big White Wall – online community
- Workplace mental health support service: 0300 4568114 - a free and confidential support service